

**Name:** Melissa Jones  
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**Training completed:**

Appreciative Inquiry Facilitator Training (AIFT) – The Center for Appreciative Inquiry

November 12-15, 2019

San Diego, CA, USA

Twenty-six (26) training hours completed

**Organization:**

The Alberta Foster and Kinship Association (AFKA) is a non-profit, charitable organization, which provides support to foster and kinship families, advocates for the rights of children, provides and arranges for training and social gatherings, educates the public about foster and kinship care, and serves as a liaison between foster and kinship families and Alberta Child and Family Services Division. I was asked, as the Associate Executive Director, to lead the organization's move forward in growth through an Appreciative Inquiry format. I have spent 8 years with the organization developing relationships with AFKA staff, the AFKA Board of Directors, Presidents of local associations, Alberta Ministry of Children's Services staff, and foster and kinship caregivers across the province of Alberta. With my training and certification as an Executive Coach, it made sense to receive additional training in Appreciative Inquiry and lead the organization through this approach to continue working through challenges and be the best we can be in difficult times.

**PART I: Narrative Summary**

Engaging with people, individually and in groups, as the Associate Executive Director for the AFKA has been both challenging and rewarding over the last 8 years. With certification I received as an Executive Coach, I had some training in the concept of Appreciative Inquiry. I would apply it to my own life and coach others in applying it in their lives to reach goals they set out for themselves. Appreciative Inquiry quickly became my favourite form of interacting with people, also including the concepts in everyday business meetings or interactions on a personal level. The principles of Appreciate Inquiry have guided me in helping others appreciate

what is, dream and visualize about what will be, adjust their mindset to one of strengths and opportunity, to set out goals to achieve their preferred future, and to celebrate successes along the way no matter how small. Having used this type of language and application when appropriate with colleagues, I built a trust in them to try the full Appreciative Inquiry approach to help our organization continue to move forward in being the best we can be in times of challenges.

The main challenges faced by the AFKA are often a result of:

- constant changes in practice within Alberta Children's Services
- fluidity of foster and kinship caregivers coming into and leaving the field of caregiving
- provincial awareness of the AFKA supports and services
- commitment by AFKA Board of Directors and local association Presidents to act on behalf of promoting the AFKA in their regions

Past events have happened for Strategic Development for the AFKA and Board of Directors. These have often been deficit based, with complaints from participants regarding lack of follow-through and frustration with things not happening beyond those events. The last event had taken place in 2016, with little movement on goals established beyond work completed at the office level. It was time to do another look at some form of development to help the association move forward and to get buy-in from the Board Members and local association Presidents to develop and assist with goals that would be ongoing and supported by each member. In sharing the concept of Appreciative Inquiry with the AFKA Executive Director and Board President, I was able to create the positive energy and excitement for what an Appreciative Inquiry could be for this goal. Knowing the focus would be one that is based on strengths, not deficits, it was suggested I share this form of development with the Board of Directors. I was excited for this opportunity, as this one conversation alone created a level of positive energy and hope for the future. I knew it would do the same for the Board of Directors and would be a great starting point to work on shifting mindsets and engaging support.

The Board of Directors heard, from me, about the Appreciative Inquiry approach (ie. The four D's and the Principles) and the benefits of using this type of approach to create a plan for the AFKA to move forward in developing and achieving goals. It was decided, with a great amount of positive energy in the room, to continue with this approach with the Board of Directors. One of the Directors had participated in an AI approach elsewhere and was vocal in sharing her positive reflection of it and her hopes for using it with the AFKA. The inclusion of the local association Presidents came as a result of the Define phase of the Appreciative Inquiry, which will be described more in the body of this report.

Having the ability to share a strength-based approach to developing goals for an organization or individuals, always energizes me to continue doing more and to want to share this approach with as many people as I can. I know in my own life, the more I focus on what is working well and on my own strengths, as well as those of people I interact with regularly, the easier it is to

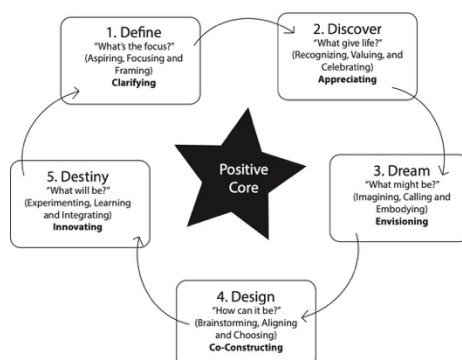
stay focused on my own preferred future and making choices along the way to achieve goals I set out. Helping others do the same and celebrating successes as they work through their own goals, gives me such a sense of accomplishment, gratitude and happiness in my own life. This way of thinking, behaving, and interacting with others has become a part of me and has changed my life immensely. I look for the strengths in myself and others daily, I highlight what is working well rather than what isn't, I ask what can be done more of, I keep my preferred future vision in my mind daily, and I celebrate as the "little" things start falling into place toward my preferred future. I am so grateful every day the concept of Appreciative Inquiry was introduced to me so many years ago and has continued to evolve for me since then.

## **PART II: Practicum Report**

### **Define:**

Prior to attending the training, the AFKA Executive Director and Board President approached me about completing a strategic planning session with the Board of Directors. With having some working knowledge of the appreciative inquiry approach through my coaching practice, I suggested using this format to move the direction of the conversation with the Board of Directors toward one that is positive in nature. I was unfamiliar with how to use the approach with a group of people, therefore I attended the training in San Diego, CA from November 12-15, 2019.

Following the training, I met with the AFKA Executive Director and Board President again to highlight what the process would entail, including the formation of a core group and its purpose. It was decided to bring awareness of this process to the Board of Directors at the next meeting, to educate them on what an appreciative inquiry would look like and to narrow down their desires to a common theme with which to engage in an appreciative inquiry. This event occurred following the Board of Director's quarterly meeting on January 25, 2020, lasting approximately 2 hours. With the help of the following visual, I provided information to the Board of Directors about the appreciative inquiry process and explanation of how the approach will assist with moving forward positively in a normally deficit-based view of the system within which we work.



There was discussion regarding the topic of inquiry, with a generic starting point developed by the AFKA Executive Director and Board President (ie. With new members coming on the Board of Directors, we would like to revisit the roles of the association's Board members; what generative topic do we want to focus on together regarding these roles? In other words, what do we want to do more of within the roles of the Board of Directors?). I explained the term "generative topic" to the group, which helped them to remain focused on an appreciative mindset rather than one that is deficit based.

A large list was created by the participants, written on chart paper by myself, answering the questions presented. On a few occasions, participants wanted to begin brainstorming on the "how" to achieve these items. I was required to remind them the "how" will come later in the process; our role at this point was to identify those areas that were important to the Board. Once the list was exhausted, I posted the pieces of chart paper around the room for the group to see. I then asked them to move about the room and read the options listed. With different coloured markers, they indicated their top three options by making a large dot beside each one they chose. This allowed the group to reflect afterwards on the options that were most important to the group. Those generative topics included:

- What is our mandate and purpose of being on the Board and being here
- Importance of committees
- Individually why are you here
- Do we as the AFKA make a difference
- Role as a Director and Community to advocate for the caregivers, community, families and children
- How do we continue to move forward
- How do we change public perception of foster care and kinship
- How does the AFKA become equal partners in decision of kids
- How do continue to be a team and work together to be cohesive, honest, consistent, supportive
- How do we get caregivers to buy into what we are doing
- How social media families
- How do we improve connections with chief and council
- How do we better support our volunteers
- How can we inform more caregivers of the AFKA programs and supports
- How do we communicate to the department, the importance and value so info gets out to caregivers
- How do we create a positive view of foster care in social media

Interestingly, through discussion, the group was able to create a topic that was general enough to be inclusive of the above topics. The Board of Directors really wanted to get a sense of "who"

the association was from the perspective of themselves and local association Presidents across the province, as well as what they all held as a future vision for the association. The topic for inquiry was chosen to be:

### **The Alberta Foster and Kinship Association at its Best**

In narrowing down the theme for appreciative inquiry, the AFKA Board of Directors were able to identify other individuals to participate in the two-day event as part of the core group. Across our province, there are numerous regional and local associations supporting caregivers. Their participation in this event will help achieve the positive energy, direction and consistency to support creating a shared vision, positive change, and movement province wide. Therefore, regional and local association presidents and vice-presidents would be invited to participate in the appreciative inquiry event.

The event was originally scheduled for April 4-5, 2020 in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus worldwide, preventative measures were implemented to minimize the possibility of our participants from coming into contact with the virus. The appreciative inquiry event was rescheduled to take place October 23-24, 2020 in Jasper, Alberta, Canada at the AFKA's yearly scheduled conference and AGM event. Due to the continued restrictions of COVID-19, the AFKA annual conference was canceled. However, the appreciative inquiry event for the Board of Directors and local association Presidents did take place in the same scheduled location with safe distancing and hygiene practice.

#### **DAY 1**

##### **Discovery:**

To create a positive, forward thinking mindset for each individual in the group, I believed it was important to approach the whole experience to the best of my ability using the 5 principles of Appreciative Inquiry (ie. constructionist, simultaneity, poetic, anticipatory, and positive).

As participants arrived for the first morning of the event, I asked to approach a table with paper lunch bags, markers, and a variety of 5x7 sized images. I encouraged to take a bag, write their name on it, then choose an image that depicts them at their best. They then taped the image on their bag and took the bag with them to the table they chose to sit at.

It was important to create a culture of safety for the 2-day event. Once everyone arrived and were settled, I guided the group in developing a list of expectations to create "a foundation of trust", illustrating an agreed upon environment to create safety while working together on the important work being done over the 2 day event. I did not remember to take a photo of this

list, however it did contain the following items: respect for one another's ideas, positive language, laughter, sense of humour, honesty, and openness. There was some extensive discussion regarding the meaning behind "honesty", as it held two meanings that needed to be expressed: honesty about information/ideas being provided to the group by individuals, as well as honesty from participants with the feedback on the information/ideas.

Having a safe space created, we went around the room to do introductions. I then asked them to share the best thing that had happened to them so far that day with the person beside them at their table. They were given 1 minute each and then brought back to the larger group to share some of the positive things that had happened. This also gave me an opportunity to ask them how they "felt" as the "storyteller" and the "listener", as well as to highlight how the energy level had shifted to a higher frequency in the room; our positive focus had created a positive ripple in the room.

The Appreciate Inquiry approach, developed by Dr. David Cooperrider, was then explained to the larger group as a collaborative, strengths-based approach to change. The four components of the approach (4 D's – Discovery, Dream, Design, Destiny/Delivery) were shared and explained in detail with examples to support the participants' understanding. I explained to the group the rationale for this approach in creating change or motivation to move forward with goals: our world in child intervention, as well as the supports/work we provide within it, is always changing; we want to change with it in the most positive way possible, as deficit-based ways of thinking and planning do not work to create change or motivation to move forward with positive energy and excitement.

"Our words create our world" gave an opening for participants to reflect on how the words they choose actually create the world in which they live. The notion of Social Constructivism was shared with the group. I was able to emphasize that how we relate, communicate and interact with one another creates the world in which we live in; who we talk to, what we talk about, how we talk to each other are all key to sustaining current patterns and changing them. As an example, I asked them who was familiar with the standard question we ask our kids, "What happened at school today?", and what is generally the standard response(s) we get from them? It was noted the response to that standard question was pretty common and vague (ie. "nothing"). In order to evoke a positive response, one which often leads to further conversation, we need to choose our words differently. A participant then offered an alternative question they use that evokes more of a response from their kids, "What's the best thing that happened at school today?" Solely changing the words within a question, elicits different reflections, emotions and responses.

With the ever-changing world of Child Intervention, it is important for the AFKA to continue moving forward with these changes in the best possible way. Using an Appreciative Inquiry approach, we are given an opportunity to uncover the very best in the organization, those who work within it and support it, and to live into the best images of the AFKA's future. In order to do this, we must ask, "What's already working?" and build upon that. Therefore, knowing how

our words and actions create our worlds, the group was together for this event to appreciate and inquire into “The AFKA at our best!”

The first large task was to conduct the Appreciative Interviews. I provided the participants with both verbal and written instructions as to how those interviews would be conducted. As the majority of this group of individuals were familiar with one another, I encouraged each person to pair up with someone they either didn’t know or didn’t know well. Each pair was given one hour to complete their interviews and be ready to share at a table with another pair.

The interview handout included the following questions:

**Paired Interviews:** *The AFKA at its Best*

1. Tell me a story about the best times you experienced interacting with the AFKA. Looking at your entire experience with the team, recall a time when you felt most alive, most involved, or most excited about your involvement. Describe the experience in detail.

What made it an exciting experience?

Who was involved?

What did others do to support that as an exciting experience?

2. Let’s talk for a moment about some things **you value** deeply; specifically, the things you value about **yourself**.

A. YOURSELF: Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself – as a human

B. YOUR WORK: When you are feeling best about the work you are doing as a team member, what do you value about it?

C. THE AFKA: What is it about the AFKA that **YOU** value? What is the single most important thing that the AFKA has contributed to your life?

3. What do you think is the **core value** of the AFKA? What is it that, if it did not exist, would make the AFKA totally different than it currently is?

4. What **three wishes** do you have for the AFKA?

Participants came back to the larger group with their interview partner and joined another pair at a table. This was a great way to mix up the group, having them interact with different people they may not normally engage with. Each person who interviewed shared the story they hear from their interviewee. Once all had a chance to share at the table, the smaller group brainstormed the themes they hear in all the stories, recording as they generated these themes. With all the themes generated, each group then reviewed what they had and discussed which of the themes were the most life-giving forces in the stories: Which ones created the most excitement? What was it they wanted to create more of? This part of the Appreciative Inquiry was the toughest for all the groups. I found I needed to explain the expectations of this portion with each group, answering their questions and confirming what they thought was expected. Now that I have done this with a larger group and have gathered more awareness, I will have more examples to share next time with another group of people going through an Appreciative Inquiry.



I asked each group to write their essential theme(s), what they wanted to create more of, on a large sticky note and attach it on top of the original list. Each group was then given the opportunity to share with the larger group what they found as the common, most valuable life-giving forces they want to see more of. Once shared, the groups posted their lists around the room.

The themes that evolved from the groups included:

- Empowerment
- Voice
- Growth
- Purpose \* goals
- Teamwork
- Friendship \* networking
- Supportive culture
- Coming together as a team
- Networking



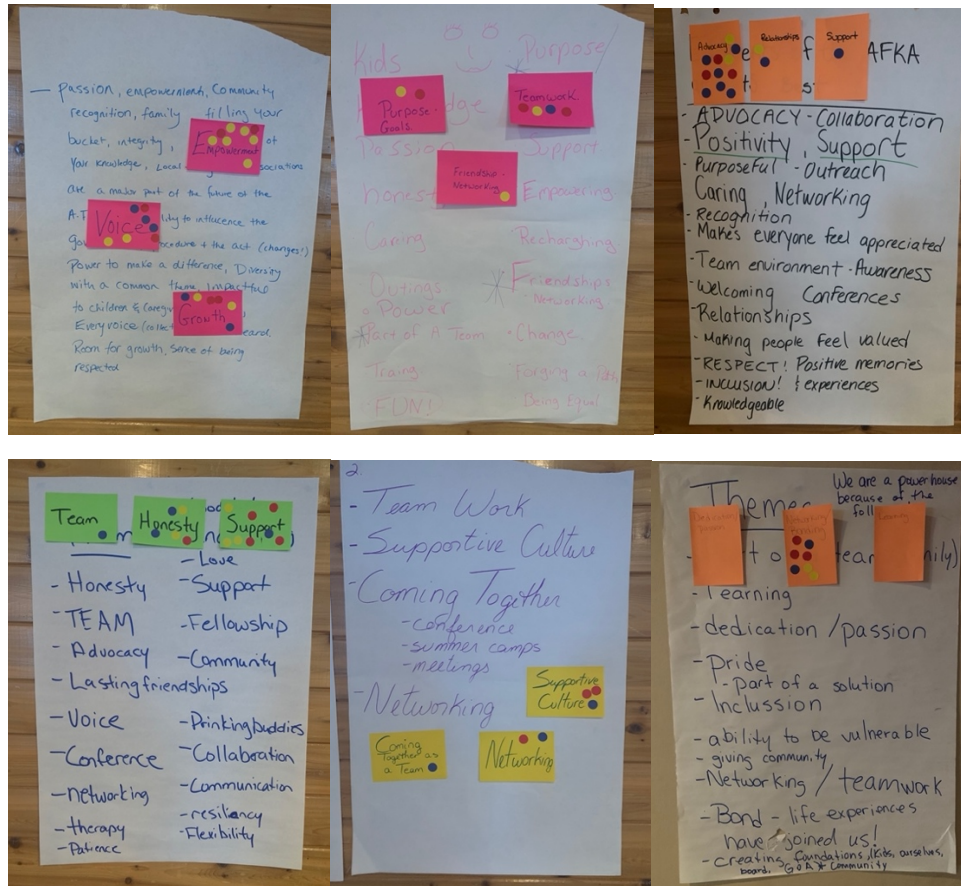
- Advocacy
- Relationships
- Support
- Dedication/passion
- Networking/bonding
- Learning

At this point we concluded for a lunch break. Upon return from lunch, participants were asked to gather their appreciative bags from the side table and take it back to their group's table. I then explained the purpose of the "Appreciation Bags". Knowing everyone had chosen an image that they felt represented them at "their best", it was time to share why they chose the picture they did to describe them at their best. I asked everyone to be intentional over the two day event to write a note to each person in the room sharing what they appreciated most about that person, and to put the note in the person's bag at the side of the room when they had an opportunity. This was an important task for a few reasons, I believe: to create a positive mindset to focus on something "good", to remind each person about his/her own "strengths", and to set the tone for every person to think about the strengths of others within the room. I provided reminders, throughout the event, to make sure they completed this task.



I spoke with the group about our "living system"; that is, we live in a system that is ever changing and evolving depending on what is brought into or done within the environment. How our environments/world around us will move (ie. life giving, life depleting) dependent on what we do within it; we "choose" the direction of our living system. As a common saying goes, "You find what you look for", so, too, we create what we want to find.

Each person was then given three sticker dots and was asked to take some time to reflect on all the themes posted, then to choose the three that excited them. These could be the themes their own group created or themes created by other groups. This scatter-gram activity was a wonderful way to demonstrate to them where most of the energy lay in the group regarding the themes of what groups wanted to see more of. What they want to create more of will help them find ideas and generate goals toward that wish for the future.



Back in their small groups, participants were asked to discuss the themes they chose and agree on one theme they most wanted to create more of for the AFKA to be at its best. This was a challenging piece for many of the groups, as they felt so much of all they discussed was important. I reminded them this was an important starting point and to pick the one that felt the MOST important that could be worked on right away; the other themes would have an opportunity in the future to be revisited.

## DREAM:

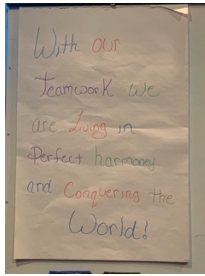
Moving into the next stage of the Appreciative Inquiry, each table was provided a variety of craft supplies to use in constructing their Visual Image of their wish for the future, their main theme of what they wanted to create more of for the organization. The creativity within many of the groups was wonderful to witness. The energy and excitement put into creating a Visual Image, depicting their chosen theme, was very positive; the perfect activity to bring energy back for the afternoon after a very tiring morning. The groups were given approximately 45 minutes to create their visual. They were given the choice of the type of visual the group agreed would best illustrate the group's vision: a skit, collage, song, drawing, or something else of their choice.

The following are the most important themes chosen, along with a picture from each group sharing their visual (one group was omitted, as one of the participants did not want his picture shared in this report):

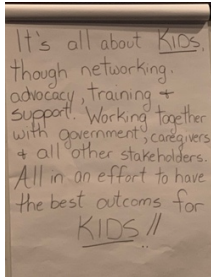


The next stage of the Dream Phase, was to have the groups develop a provocative proposition (ie. a possibility statement, vision); a word image based on the visual metaphor they had just created and shared. The provocative proposition was another piece some of the groups struggled with in the beginning, as the abstract nature of this phase of dreaming was new to many of them. After explaining it in more detail with some groups separately, they were able to move forward with the task. The groups were given 30 minutes to develop their provocative proposition and to be prepared to share to the larger group with it written on chart paper. Each group had time to share with the larger group and then post their chart paper the wall in the room for future reference.

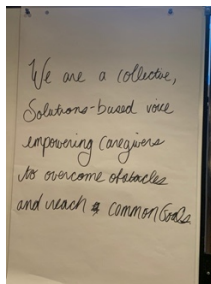
The word images created included:



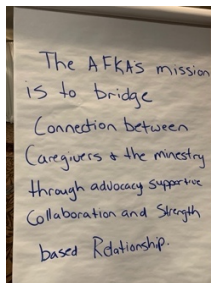
With our teamwork we are living in perfect harmony and conquering the world!



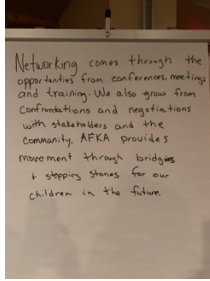
It's all about KIDS, through networking, advocacy, training and support. Working together with government, caregivers and all other stakeholders. All in an effort to have the best outcomes for KIDS!!



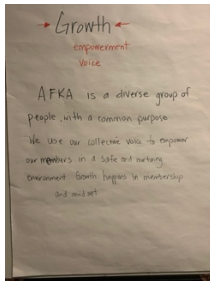
We are a collective, solution-based voice empowering caregivers to overcome obstacles and reach common goals.



The AFKA's mission is to bridge connection between caregivers and the Ministry through advocacy, supportive collaboration and strength-based relationship.



Networking comes through the opportunities from conferences, meetings and training. We also grow from confrontations and negotiations with stakeholders and the community. AFKA provides movement through bridges and stepping stones for our children in the future.



AFKA is a diverse group of people with a common purpose. We use our collective voice to empower our members in a safe and nurturing environment. Growth happens in membership and mindset.

The first day concluded with a highlight of all the possibilities with the groups' visual representations and word images.

## DAY 2

### Design:

To start off our second day, I asked the participants to choose a small rock from an assortment left on a table as they came in the room. Once everyone had arrived, I had them look at their rocks and think about all they were grateful for in that moment. I encouraged them to use this small rock as their "rock of gratitude"; to keep it in their pocket or leave it on the desk/nightstand, to pause for a moment either throughout the day or at the end of the day when they take it out of their pocket or see it on their desk/nightstand, and to take a moment to remember the things they were grateful for that day. In doing this, they would be creating mini-mindfulness moments and focusing on positive thinking; by flipping the switch and creating more of these moments in the day, the average day becomes much more positive (ie. what you look for is what you find; the Poetic Principle).

I then brought their attention to a quote by Bernard J Mohr (2001), "We are increasingly confronted with a world in which change does not occur during a separate time period, after which we get back to business as usual. Rather, change is now the very water in which we swim." I believed this quote to be fitting to share with this group, as there have been numerous times I've heard from some of the individuals of their distrust in the process of an event like this. Prior to the event, they often referred to organizational/Board development activities as exciting in the beginning, but then were always disappointed because the excitement would phase out and no change would occur. I explained

this to the larger group, with a reminder that past explorations have been deficit-based with no follow-up, whereas the appreciative inquiry approach is strength-based and would be followed up as a group in the near future. I emphasized the awareness we all had that in order for the change to occur as they wished to see, it would take commitment on their part to continue with the goals they would develop and to understand we all have a role to play in making our vision/dream a reality. The response was favourable, with many individuals stating they were excited about this format and are starting to see how it will benefit everyone moving forward.

At this point we did a review of the visual and word images for the preferred future each group had dreamt about. I told the group we need to continue to swim through the changes and use these dreams to assist with the movement. The rest of the day would be focused on making plans to help their dreams move to reality.

Each group was given a task to look at how they were going to make their preferred future happen. They started by brainstorming as many strategic intentions/initiatives as they could think of (ie. quantity not quality), listing their initiatives on chart paper. Next, they were asked to choose the initiative(s) they wished to focus on first, keeping in mind to focus first on high-impact/low-effort initiatives for some early wins. Each group was then given the opportunity to share these focused initiatives with the larger group, keeping their chart paper at their tables for future work in the afternoon.

Once the groups had completed the above task, I showed them a video on developing “SMART” goals. This was something I could have done, but I understand the need for visual breaks in adult learning and felt the chosen video did a great job of explaining the process. This video explained the process of writing focused, specific goals through a “SMART” lens; to ensure their goals were specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely. I made sure I had the information also written on chart paper for the participants to refer back to. Given a handout to help guide them in their planning, the participants started creating their design plan by filling in their Action Steps (ie. What actions do they need to take? What resources do they need to obtain?), Potential Mentors (ie. Who might help us? Who needs to be involved?), and Confirmation – Timelines (How will we know we did it?). Some groups had more than one initiative, therefore they took time to complete this guide for each of the initiatives they had identified as important to start with.

Each group was provided an opportunity to present to the larger group their initiatives and how they had designed to set about achieving them. Prior to the presentations, I had asked the larger group to think individually about how they might be able to support an initiative that resonated with them. They would be given an opportunity to offer their assistance in the afternoon, so were asked to make note of those thoughts and feeling to which they could come back to at the appropriate time.

Once all groups had presented, we concluded for lunch with reminders to ensure they’ve written an appreciation note for each person in the room.



**Provocative Proposition**  
Networking

**BI**  
Information  
Pamphlet

Action Steps	Potential Mentors	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create template</li> <li>Gather info to share</li> <li>Organize Data</li> <li>Contact Print distribute</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present AFKA members</li> <li>Pos AFKA members</li> <li>Foster/Adopt families</li> </ul>	6 months

**Provocative Proposition**  
Networking

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Action Steps	Potential Mentors	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create template</li> <li>Gather info to share</li> <li>Organize Data</li> <li>Contact Print distribute</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present AFKA members</li> <li>Pos AFKA members</li> <li>Foster/Adopt families</li> </ul>	6 months

**PP**  
Community engagement

**BI**  
Kids events to promote community awareness (Recruitment)

Action	Mentors	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Venue</li> <li>recruit volunteers</li> <li>Organizers</li> <li>Food</li> <li>Print Flyers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools</li> <li>Organizations</li> <li>Businesses</li> <li>Scouts</li> <li>Food</li> <li>Printers</li> </ul>	4 months

**PP**  
Recruitment

**BI**  
Trade shows

Action	Mentor	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find info for pamphlets</li> <li>Using our accumulated resources</li> <li>Require Identifiers</li> <li>Looking for Venues</li> <li>Looking for funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AFKA Foster/Adopt Children</li> <li>Mentors</li> <li>Go A</li> </ul>	Ongoing

**PP**  
Networking

**BI**  
Caregiver recruitment video

Action	Mentor	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange interviews</li> <li>Write Scripts</li> <li>Approach media</li> <li>Get Volunteers</li> <li>Arrange funding (with GoA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AFKA</li> <li>Contact AFKA members</li> <li>Agencies</li> <li>Departments</li> </ul>	1 year

**Provocative Proposition**  
Networking

**BI**  
Contact

Action Step	Potential Mentors	Confirmation - Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update/Recreate Contact List from AFKA members</li> <li>Make Contact with local Agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AFKA/Local PCY Ministers</li> <li>Local Aboriginal Director</li> </ul>	Monthly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AFKA staff</li> <li>Local Aboriginal Director</li> <li>Local AFKA Director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Aboriginal Director</li> </ul>	3 months
		Yearly

**Provocative Propositions:**

We are a collective, solutions based voice empowering caregivers to overcome obstacles and reach common goals.

**Bold Initiative:** Utilize and involve AFKA MEMBERSHIP

**Action Steps:**

- Identify caregiver from AFKA stakeholders
- Identified caregiver introduce themselves as liaison to identify trends to AFKA
- Identify who AFKA contact will be
- Propose strategy/questions to group to stimulate conversation to help identify trends

**Potential Mentors:**

- AFKA Board, Presidents, Mentors

**Confirmation - Timeline:**

- When trends start being identified to AFKA
- Solutions are provided and communicated

**Bold Initiative:** UTILIZE AND INVOLVE AFKA MEMBERSHIP

**Action Steps:**

- Ensure up to date member contact lists, i.e. (email, mailing, phone)
- Use membership for surveys, feedback
- Notify of training for AFKA members
- Notify of relevant updates

**Potential Mentors:** AFKA STAFF

**Confirmation - Timeline:**

- When the first members only communication has gone out
- No later than Dec. 15

**BOLD INITIATIVES:** Request Agency Policy and guidelines to better support caregivers (agency)

**Action Steps:**

- Identify ALL AGENCIES and KEY CONTACTS FOR ALBERTA
- MAKE CONTACT TO OBTAIN POTENTIAL MENTORS: CS MINISTRY, AFKA STAFF

**CONFIRMATION-TIMELINES:**

Once info is obtained

Action	Mentor	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Request Agency Policy and guidelines to better support caregivers (agency)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AFKA</li> <li>Contact AFKA members</li> <li>Agencies</li> <li>Departments</li> </ul>	1 year

**PP**  
Networking

**BI**  
Caregiver recruitment video

Action	Mentor	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange interviews</li> <li>Write Scripts</li> <li>Approach media</li> <li>Get Volunteers</li> <li>Arrange funding (with GoA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AFKA</li> <li>Contact AFKA members</li> <li>Agencies</li> <li>Departments</li> </ul>	1 year

**Provocative Proposition:**

The AFKA's Mission is to bridge connection between caregivers + the Ministry through advocacy, supportive collaboration + strength based relationships.

**Bold Initiative:**

Create an advice group (learning group) #2 Resolution 2018

Action Steps	Potential Mentors	Confirmation - Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a group consisting of 4-6 members</li> <li>Identify 2-3 potential mentors</li> <li>Approach mentors</li> <li>Approach mentors</li> <li>Approach mentors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presidents</li> <li>Board members</li> <li>Local Aboriginal Director</li> </ul>	Monthly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approach mentors</li> <li>Approach mentors</li> <li>Approach mentors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Aboriginal Director</li> </ul>	3 months
		Yearly

**GROWTH**

**Initiative:** Automatic membership to the AFKA.

Action	Mentor	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add membership to the AFKA</li> <li>Approach mentors</li> <li>Approach mentors</li> <li>Approach mentors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AFKA</li> <li>Contact AFKA members</li> <li>Agencies</li> <li>Departments</li> </ul>	1 year

**GROWTH**

**Initiative:** More contact / mtgs to be set up by AFKA to support continuity of info sharing across the province

Action	Mentor	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approach mentors</li> <li>Approach mentors</li> <li>Approach mentors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AFKA</li> <li>Contact AFKA members</li> <li>Agencies</li> <li>Departments</li> </ul>	1 year

**GROWTH**

**Initiative:** Information Sharing about the AFKA for the benefit of people understanding who we are & what we can do to benefit

Action	Mentor	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Video presentation</li> <li>Approach mentors</li> <li>Approach mentors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AFKA</li> <li>Contact AFKA members</li> <li>Agencies</li> <li>Departments</li> </ul>	1 year

**Destiny:**

Participants came back from lunch buzzing with conversation. Appreciation bags were being filled and there was a positive energy in the room. As everyone sat at their tables, I explained our next step in the process of developing the design of the dreams, moving into the destiny of their initiatives; this is when they get to plan how to implement the initiatives they developed and to create the first steps toward their visioned preferred future.

A handout was provided to each participant to help them stay focused and organized, individually and as a small group. I had them review the initiatives their group listed on the chart paper, then to reflect on what steps they would be able to take, on their own, to help actualize their bold initiative(s) toward making “AFKA at its Best”. They were encouraged to come up with a “commitment”, an “offer”, and a “request” to present to their small group regarding the actions they decided they would be able to actualize. Once it appeared the majority of the participants had completed their notes, they were then encouraged to take turns sharing what they came up with. It was energizing, for myself, to observe the engagement and positive interaction from each small team; supporting one another in combining the tasks and finding ways to make their immediate initiatives happen.

The final task with the larger group was to have each smaller group take turns at completing their “asks” to the larger group for support with their initiative plan(s). This was also the time where others were provided an opportunity to offer their assistance with an initiative they felt drawn to in another group. It was interesting how the “asks” and “offers” were very similar and seem to come together in a well thought-out plan involving people from a variety of the small groups.

I did have one group who struggled with the final phases of design and destiny, as it was a small group of three and two members ended up not feeling well and didn’t complete the activities. The person left over joined in with another group to provide support with the initiatives developed by that group.

To the large group, I reiterated their desire to see this event continue and not phase out over time. I asked them to think about a reasonable amount of time to gather again, virtually, and visit the work that had been done. I ensured they knew the process of us coming together again would look at what successes were achieved, what challenges had arisen, and to develop the next steps to move forward further. The group had agreed upon gathering again, virtually, in 8 weeks time. A date and time were established, with a promise from me to share an email with all participants that would include the date, time, and ZOOM meeting link.

**Appreciation Bag Activity:**

Participants were given time to have a break and complete any appreciation notes they needed to prior to reconvening. While they did this, I worked at creating a circle with the chairs that were distanced appropriately for COVID safety guidelines. I then placed each individuals’ appreciation bags



under a chair in the circle. As people came back to the room, I asked them to take a seat in the circle. They were requested to make sure the bag under their chair was not their own and to keep the name confidential for the time being. The process of the Appreciation Bag Activity involved having 2 people at a time stand and face one another in the center of the chair circle (with appropriate distancing). The speaker (person who called the other whose name was on the bag) was given a time to describe to that person what they appreciated most about that person. When they were done, they handed the bag to the other person (ie. the owner of the bag). The speaker would then sit down and the receiver would call the next person for whom they had a bag for, then became the speaker. This continued until everyone had an opportunity to speak of appreciation for someone else.

I began the activity in order to demonstrate how the process worked. The activity was a huge highlight to the end of a very tiring two days. There was laughter, tears, and a very positive energy around the circle of participants.



### **Follow-up:**

Two weeks prior to the follow-up virtual session, I sent out an email to the participants from the Appreciative Inquiry. There were some challenges that followed, as a few participants had resisted strongly having to continue with participation in the initiatives that were developed and with having to continue with the follow-up sessions moving forward. Prior to the event, it was communicated to the participants what the plan was for the weekend and why they were included. This was re-stated to those who resisted and were provided the rationale for their involvement and why it was important to continue moving forward. It became evident that many of the initiatives had not been acted upon and there was a sense of urgency and anxiety around not having anything to share at the follow-up gathering. I had to make it clear to those individuals that whatever steps were taken, even those that were not taken, were very valuable to bring back to the group to either celebrate or revisit; reminding them this was part of the process in adapting to the change and moving forward together as a team the best we can.

All participants from the 2 day event did attend the follow-up virtual gathering. I opened the session thanking everyone for joining in, celebrating that we had come together again after 8 weeks of being apart, summarized quickly why we were gathering, and the process for the 2 hours we had together.

In order to give each group a chance to prepare for presentation to the larger group, I set up breakout groups on the ZOOM gathering. Each group was given an opportunity to meet in their own breakout room, keeping in mind what would be brought back to the larger group. I asked them to: (#1) make notes on everything, no matter how small or large they thought them to be, that was worth celebrating because it happened; (#2) make notes on the challenges they had; (#3) make notes on what their next steps would be in moving toward their initiative. The groups were given 30 minutes to discuss these items and to prepare to present back to the larger group.

Back in the larger group, I had each group share their celebrations to the group. I compiled them as they spoke onto the ZOOM whiteboard. As they began to share, it was very evident there were many successes to be celebrating and to be proud of.

information sharing of AFKA, video presentation in the works, have talked to some people, still need to do more on that

more face to face, presidents talking to local associations ... ongoing

AFKA membership automatic to all, been discussed at provincial level, more needs to be discussed there

expand awareness to government staff about AFKA membership

add to form caregivers sign when re-licensing

AFKA + Ministry meeting set up for Presidents to chat ADM will be joining this meeting

President & Board Mtg every 8 weeks, this is happening!

local associations hold meetings face to face with caregivers and stream line info down to presidents and caregivers... reminder for everyone to be aware of that

reconnected here to readjust: updated contact list of foster and kinship provincially/regionally; would be nice to be in contact personally when a new caregiver comes on board ; take that to the Ministry and ask if Presidents can get this information to make contact

community engagement - lock downs have made this difficult recruitment video - covid restrictions have made this challenging

send letters to the MLAs to share what the associations do ... CRCC is going to be putting a letter together to send out

implement adhoc committee to bring concerns to the Ministry; redundant to do because there is already a group that meets; this group met last week and talk about more ideas of how this type of group might work and how it can be presented to the AFKA

accessing dedicated membership list ... as memberships come in to the office, this information is then going into a spreadsheet broken down provincially and regionally

monitoring facebook groups ... Annie is now an admin for the provincial facebook group who will monitor trends and brought forward to the AFKA

Agency policy ... reached out to Align and had a positive conversation with them, encourage caregivers to reach out to their agencies for policy information and continue to support caregivers from agencies through AFKA programs

Groups were then asked to share and complete “asks” for any challenges they were having. The main challenge, experienced by a couple of the groups, was making time to get together to move forward on the items they had committed to. They did express an appreciation for the time to come back together to discuss what was happening or needed to happen to continue moving toward achievement of their initiatives. I could sense the energy shifting and a renewed sense of goal completion was becoming evident with more conversation, positive word choices and continued desires to work on goals.

**Future Gatherings:**

The AFKA has been through some very challenging obstacles since the Appreciative Inquiry event, therefore there has been a delay in bringing the participants back together again for another review. There have been, however, continued positive developments with the collaborative work between the AFKA and the Ministry of Children's Services as a result of some of the discussion and initiatives from the appreciative inquiry. Those initiatives that had successes after 8 weeks continue to have successes as those initiatives move forward.

I will meet with the Executive Director and Board President to encourage the next round of celebration gathering. I believe it to be important to gather 2-3 times through the year, as without a consistent expectation of moving forward, the tendency for groups is to phase out due to various reasons.

**Reflection:**

Knowing the big dreams held by many of the participants going into the appreciative inquiry, I was excited to be part of a process to guide the creation of goals to achieve these dreams for the organization. I knew there would be a few challenging individuals, but also believed in the power of the appreciative inquiry principles in helping to shape the event and encourage the shift in mindset of those participants who were skeptical. I also recognized the importance for continued support following the event to maintain the movement of the groups goals toward their initiative achievements. Through this experience, I found my energy to be very positive and infectious. I felt confident in the material I was sharing, however did have some moments when I realized the information was not as detailed as it could have been for the participants who have never experienced and appreciative inquiry. I was, however, able to visit those smaller groups to provide a more in-depth explanation of expectations and further help shift their mindset by using the principles of appreciative inquiry when describing those expectations or sharing examples. These instances helped me recognize where I would need to provide more explanation or, at the least, an opportunity to ensure each group felt comfortable in what they were doing within each stage of the appreciative inquiry process.

The experience of facilitating an appreciative inquiry on my own, along with the follow-up with the groups afterwards, highlighted strongly two of the appreciative inquiry principles. All the principles were very evident and important during the two-day event, however it was the experience following the event that made the Anticipatory Principle and the Positive Principle really stand out. The principles of appreciative inquiry, if followed, create a space for positive, forward-moving change in the direction of what we want and dream to have more of. It is easier, as a facilitator, to create the type of environment that assists with the development of the type of thinking and behaving necessary for change. Once the facilitator is no longer able to assist that type of thinking and behaving, unless the individuals from the group have the mindset to move forward in this way, the nature of the human being takes over into old patterns and behaviours.

I noticed those who were negative about the process prior to the event were the ones who resisted creating a space in their world to work with their team in taking the steps agreed upon to move the vision of their preferred future to a reality. The Anticipatory Principle speaks to how the mindset of an individual will impact their behaviour; our behaviour and decisions are impacted by our thoughts of what we think about and imagine for our future. The Positive Principle speaks to the impact we have around us with our thoughts, which then lead to action; the more positive we look for, the more successes we pay attention to, and the more we find gratitude or appreciation for things, the more we will “find” and experience of those things. Without a positive, celebratory/grateful belief and support in recognizing our worth, our goals, our vision for the future, the challenges will present themselves and take over the mindset of the individual who allows that to happen. As we find acknowledge challenges, things that are not working well, or allow ourselves to focus on the negatives in our lives, the deficit-based way of thinking we have become accustomed to will continue to grow.

Because of these two principles, and seeing first-hand how they’ve shown themselves through the follow-up activities, I have recognized the extreme importance in consistent follow-up with participants. Bringing them continuously back into the world of looking for successes and celebrating those, in addition to revisiting their vision and helping them internalize those feelings associated with it, is so important to maintain the movement toward their preferred future.

## Appendix A – AI Outline October 2020 for AFKA

### AFKA

#### Appreciative Inquiry – October 23 & 24, 2020

##### FRIDAY MORNING

**\* have participants pick a photo that represents themselves at their best, attach it to a paper bag and write their name on the bag**

1. (SLIDE)
  - a. Welcome;
  - b. housekeeping details
  - c. Agenda
2. (SLIDE) creating an appreciative climate;
  - i. On chart paper, “Creating a foundation of trust” ... do!
  - ii. Appreciating what is with bags
3. (SLIDE) Introductions;
  - a. “What is the best thing that has happened to you today” slide
  - b. partner with someone and share (2 minutes)
  - c. notice energy in room; ask, “How did you feel?” as the story teller \* Listener
4. (SLIDE) Introduction to AI
  - a. An approach developed by Dr. David Cooperrider
  - b. a collaborative, strengths-based approach to change
  - c. appreciate (economic term ... verb, to recognize the full worth of; what we focus our attention on will appreciate or grow in value)
  - d. inquiry – an act of asking questions; the keys to unlocking what we’ll find
  - e. (SLIDE) the approach has 4 components ... 4 D’s ...
    - i. discovery (inquiry into strengths, what is working well)
    - ii. dream (creating images of a preferred future)
    - iii. design (innovate ways to create that future)
    - iv. destiny/delivery (plan to carry out the design)
5. Why are we here?
  - a. Our world is always changing and we want to change with it in the most positive way possible ... deficit based is becoming a thing of the past; doesn’t work to create change or motivation
  - b. (SLIDE) To do that, we must remember “Our Words create our World”

- c. we create the world in which we live
  - d. social constructivism (how we relate, communicate and interact with one another creates the world in which we live in; who we talk to, what we talk about, how we talk to each other are key to sustaining current patterns or changing them)
  - e. Example of asking the question, “What happened at school today?”; changing the questions creates positive emotions
  - f. An AI is an invitation to uncover the very best in organizations, ourselves and others, and to live into the best images of the future ... We will ask, “what’s already working?” And build on that!
  - g. As you are all aware and familiar with the ever-changing world of Child Intervention, it is important that the AFKA continues to move forward with these changes in the best way possible.
  - h. (SLIDE) Knowing how our words and actions create our worlds, we are here to appreciate and inquire into “The AFKA at our best!”
6. (SLIDE) Appreciative Interviews
- a. Explanation ...
    - i. inquiring into exceptional moments
    - ii. Read TIPS for conducting and Appreciative Interview FIRST
    - iii. Read interview questions & summary to become familiar
    - iv. pair up with someone you don’t know well; someone you’d like to get to know better
    - v. Using the guiding questions, interview one at a time (30 min each)
    - vi. take notes on the summary sheet and prepare to share your partner’s story later
    - vii. sit with partner after the interviews; 4 people each table
  - b. Interview time ... Peak experiences and wishes for the future
7. (SLIDE) At tables, (Small group activity #1 handout; first side only)
- a. Allow time for summaries to be complete by individuals
  - b. share stories first
  - c. identify themes on flipchart (quantity NOT quality); continue until everyone agrees on and is energized by several themes or generates new themes that emerge from the dialogue
  - d. review themes/key concepts ... select the top 2-3 core strengths that your group believes are essential and MOST want to create MORE of in the AFKA (no voting)
  - e. write these themes on large post-its and add to the chart paper (prepare to share)

## FRIDAY AFTERNOON

8. **Large group BAG PICTURE share** – take your bag and share why you chose this picture to describe you at your best ... have group write messages throughout the next day and a half to each person in the room
9. **(SLIDE)** As a large group,
  - a. Living System ... you choose the direction of yours (Life giving, life depleting)
  - b. Each group share what they found; share the themes
  - c. put flipchart with these themes on the wall for everyone to view
10. **(SLIDE)** Large group - do a scatter-gram for locating the energy (NO VOTING)
  - a. Place a dot on 2-3 themes that you personally most want to create more of
11. **(SLIDE)** Back at tables,
  - a. Reflect on the energy-gram, to notice any emerging patterns
  - b. Remember the dots are NOT votes but simply a way to display the energy of the group
  - c. Individual Activity (second side of handout)
  - d. Small group - Discuss and agree on one theme (with supporting ideas) that they MOST want to create MORE of
    - i. In deciding, ensure you are seeking
      1. “synergy” rather than consensus
      2. Higher ground rather than common ground
12. **(SLIDE)** Small group activity sheet (Dream – Visual Image)
  - i. Create a visual image (metaphor) illustrating the group’s agreed upon dream/life-giving force – skits, collages, songs, drawings, etc. (30 min)
  - ii. Presentation of visual to group (2 minutes each group)
13. **(SLIDE)** Small group activity sheet (Dream – Word Images)
  - i. Create a word image (provocative proposition, possibility statement, vision) based on the metaphor ... a provocative proposition provokes action (30 min)
  - ii. Presentation of Provocative Proposition (5 min total)
14. **(SLIDE)** The possibilities ... Highlight the growth with the group’s visual representations and word images
15. Reminders to write messages to each person in the room and add to the bag as we continue into tomorrow
16. Find a rock for tomorrow morning

## **DAY 2**

### **SATURDAY MORNING**

1. **(SLIDE)** – Housekeeping, agenda, reminders (AI Bags)
2. **(SLIDE) Group Share** – the rock of gratitude activity; carry with you daily or leave it on your desk/night stand ... when you see it or touch it, pause to think about at least one thing you are grateful for ... if you have it on you, at the end of the day when you take it off or out of your pocket, take a moment to remember the things you were grateful for that day
  - a. **Mini-mindfulness moments**
  - b. **Focus on positive thinking** ... flip the switch and create more; find your average day has become much more positive
3. **(SLIDE)** quote ... if we don't continue swimming, we'll drown and change will not take place
4. **(SLIDE)** Review of visual and word images for preferred future
5. **(SLIDE)** we need to keep swimming ... and now we'll look at how
6. **(SLIDE)** Small Group Activity
  - a. How are we going to make this (preferred futures) happen?
  - b. **(SLIDE)** Brainstorm strategic intentions or initiatives; list initiatives on chart paper
7. **(SLIDE)** Sheet #4 handout
  - a. Choose initiatives to focus on
  - b. Focus first on high-impact/low-effort initiatives (early wins)
  - c. **(SLIDE)** Video
  - d. Creating attainable goals (ie. SMART goals and responsibilities) (Specific, Measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound)
  - e. Record information from handout to chart paper
8. **(SLIDE)** Large group share of initiatives ... keep FlipChart at groups
9. **(SLIDE) LUNCH ...** *(can move this after next activity if more time before lunch)*
  - a. *Reminder of appreciation notes for other's bags*

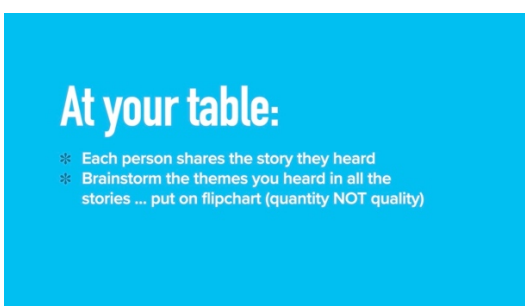
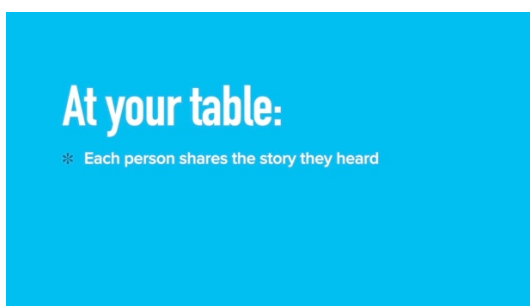
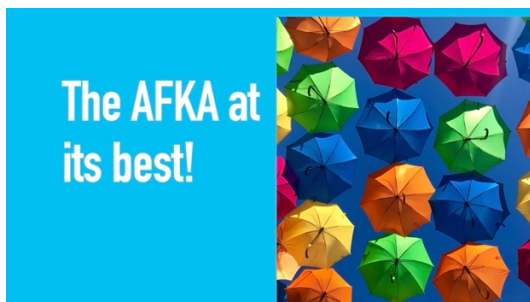
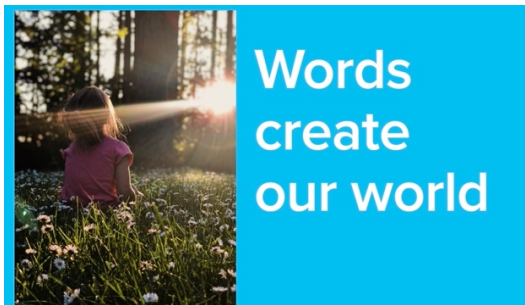
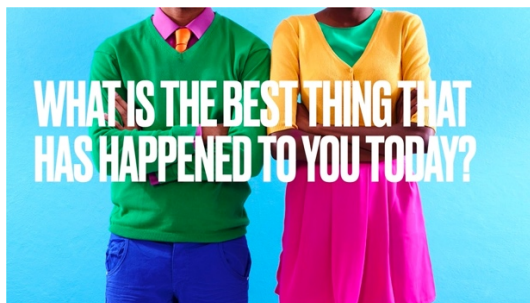
### **SATURDAY AFTERNOON**

1. **(SLIDE)** Group share of initiatives and what that will look like
2. Small Group Activity HANDOUT (individual first, then group)
3. As a result of #3 on handout, is there anything else the groups would like to do before moving forward?



4. (SLIDE) Moving forward ... how will you (as a small group) check-in to see how well the initiative is working, decide if any revisions or modifications are needed, and learn from your practice?
5. (SLIDE) Important to review often ... Add this to your plan
6. (SLIDE) Celebrate all successes (what does celebration look like?)
7. (SLIDE) YOU Appreciation Ending ...
  - a. During a short break, place bags under chairs
  - b. When back, tell participants to prepare to share what they appreciate most about the person whose bag is under their chair
  - c. Volunteer to go first ... then next person will be the one who was appreciated, until complete

## Appendix B – AFKA AI Powerpoint - October 23, 2020



## At your table:

- \* Each person shares the story they heard
- \* Brainstorm the themes you heard in all the stories ... put on flipchart (quantity NOT quality)
- \* Discuss and agree on 3-5 life-giving forces (what you MOST want to create MORE of)



LUNCH TIME!

## THE LIVING SYSTEM: YOU CHOOSE THE DIRECTION

## THE LIVING SYSTEM: YOU CHOOSE THE DIRECTION

### NOW WHAT?

#### INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY:

Reflect on the energy gram  
Complete questions



### NOW WHAT?

#### SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY:

Discuss and agree upon one  
theme you MOST want to create  
MORE of



### NOW WHAT?

#### SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY:

Create a visual to represent what  
your group's dream of a preferred  
future (ie. theme of choice)



### NOW WHAT?

#### SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY:

Create a word image of a  
preferred future



## THE POSSIBILITIES



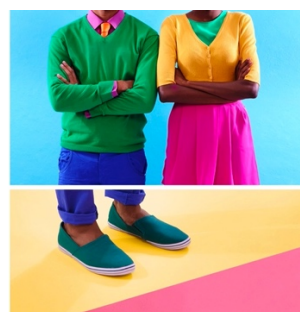
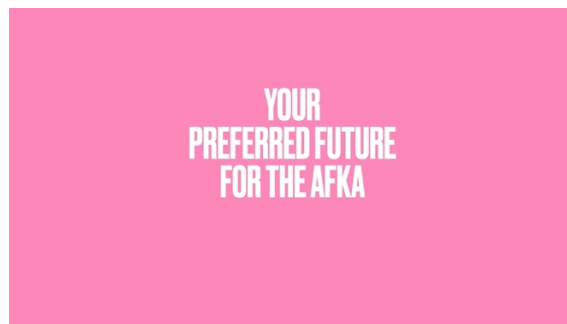
## FIND A ROCK



## Appendix C – AFKA AI Powerpoint - October 24, 2020



YOUR ROCK



**HOW**  
are you  
going to make  
this happen?

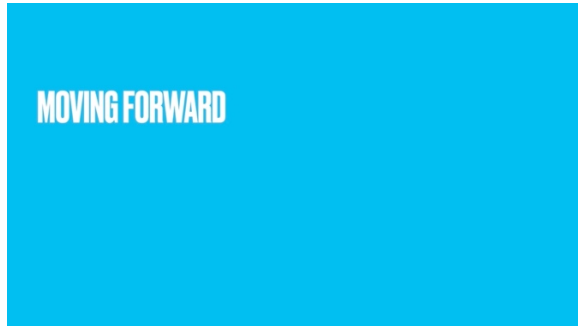




HOW are you going to make this happen?

Individually reflect on your group's initiatives:

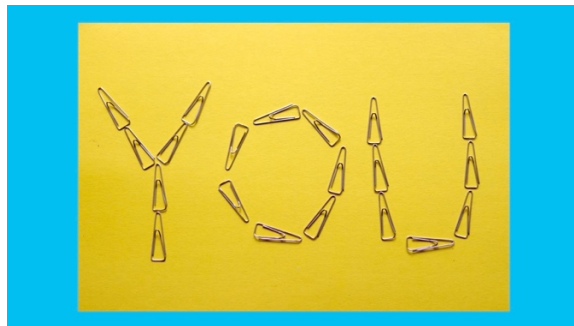
**What can YOU:**  
commit to  
offer  
request



Review Often

Focus on What is Working Well  
and What you Want to Achieve

Modify as Needed



## Appendix D – AFKA AI Paired Interviews

### Paired Interviews: *The AFKA at its Best*

1. (9 min) Tell me a story about the best times you experienced interacting with the AFKA. Looking at your entire experience with the team, recall a time when you felt most alive, most involved, or most excited about your involvement. Describe the experience in detail.

What made it an exciting experience?

Who was involved?

What did others do to support that as an exciting experience?

3. Let's talk for a moment about some things **you value** deeply; specifically, the things you value about **yourself**.

A. YOURSELF: Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself – as a human being, a friend, a parent, a citizen, and so on?

B. YOUR WORK: When you are feeling best about the work you are doing as a team member, what do you value about it?

C. THE AFKA: What is it about the AFKA that **YOU** value? What is the single most important thing that the AFKA has contributed to your life?

4. (9 min) What do you think is the **core value** of the AFKA? What is it that, if it did not exist, would make the AFKA totally different than it currently is?

5. (3 min) What **three wishes** do you have for the AFKA?



## Appendix E – AFKA AI Tips for Conducting Interviews

### TIPS FOR CONDUCTING AN APPRECIATIVE INTERVIEW

Before you begin your interview – take a moment and quickly review these:

- Use the interview protocol as a guideline. Introduce the interview and ask the questions as if you were just sitting and talking with a co-worker. Strive to create an informal atmosphere.
- Here are some questions to use to probe further:
  - Tell me more.
  - What was going on that caused you to feel that way?
  - What makes that important to you?
  - How did that affect you?
  - What was your contribution?
  - What was the organization doing that helped you do this?
  - What were other people doing that helped?
  - What do you think was really making it work?
  - How has it changed you?
- **Let the interviewee tell his/her story**, don't tell yours or give your opinion about their experiences.
- **Be genuinely curious** about their experiences, thoughts, and feelings.
- Some interviewees will take longer to think about their answers; **allow for silence**.
- If someone doesn't want to, or can't answer any of the interview questions, that's okay; let it go and go on to the next question and try and **come back to the question you missed before the end of the interview**.
- **Watch your time** – the interviewing time is planned to be one hour (total; 30 minutes each). You will need to make sure that as you are probing with fascination what they are saying, that you are also aware of your time. If you run over, check it out with the person you are interviewing. Best bet is to pace your questions appropriately to the time you have scheduled.
- **A word about confidentiality** – tell the interviewees you will keep the information they provide and the conversation confidential. You will use the information, but it will be compiled into themes using information from the interview and others. No names will be associated with the overall summary report.
- **Taking notes** – when asking questions, use the space after each question for notes. Note-taking can be tricky, but you will want to be able to read your notes after the interview is concluded. Immediately after the interview – summarize your notes, using the summary sheet at the end of the interview packet.
- When you return to the session, **sit with your interview partner and join one other pair**.

**Try to get through all questions and have fun!**

## Appendix F – AFKA AI Interview Summary Sheet

### Summary Sheet

1. What was the most appreciative **quotable quote** that came out of your interview?
2. What was the most **compelling story** that came out of your interview? What details and examples did the interviewee share? How were the interviewee and/or others changed by the story?
3. What was the most **“Life-giving” moment** of the interview for you as a listener?
4. Did a particularly **creative and/or innovative example of the AFKA at its Best** emerge during the interview? If so, describe what you learned about it.
5. What **three themes** stood out most for you during the interview?



## Appendix G – AFKA AI Small Group Activity 1

### SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY #1 – Sharing Stories

**DISCUSSION LEADER** – Manages the table task. Assures that each person who wants to speak is heard within the time available.

**TIMEKEEPER** – keep group aware of time left. Monitors report-outs and signals time remaining to person talking.

**RECORDER/REPORTER** – write group’s output on flip charts/post-it notes, using the speaker’s words. Delivers report to larger group in allotted time.

Each group manages its own dialogue and time using the guidelines below for self-managing this work.

**PURPOSE:** To discover what’s already working and uncover the common themes from our collective experiences. To discover the best of “what is” in order to envision a future we want to live into. The goal here is not to choose the best stories, or even those that represent the norm. Instead, the purpose is to find **what elements are common** to the moments of greatest success and fulfillment.

#### **GUIDELINES:**

1. **AFKA at its Best**. Go around the table. Introduce your partner and share the most **exciting and energizing story** you heard from your partner, include any **quotable quotes** your partner made. After you’ve shared, check in with your partner briefly to see if you’ve captured the highlights that matter MOST to him or her. Those who are listening, take notes on what stands out for you about what contributed to the AFKA at its Best.

*(5 minutes for each person)*

2. **Identify Themes and Key Concepts**. Recorder, create a flip chart labeled, “Elements of the AFKA at its Best”.

- Take a moment to review your notes from step 1.
- As a group, sift the stories to identify common themes and key concepts that contribute to “AFKA at its Best”.
- Recorder captures the group’s thoughts on the flipchart page.

*(5 minutes for this step)*

3. **Identify Core Strengths.** As a group, look at your themes and key concepts associated with the AFKA at its Best. Select the top 2-3 core strengths that your group believes are essential and MOST want to create MORE of in the AFKA. Write each one on a large post-it, one concept per post-it.

*(5 minutes for this step)*

4. **Post.** When your group is finished, post your flipcharts and post-its to the appropriate wall. These theme and key strengths create a visual map of the energy in the room around the positive topic (*AFKA at its Best*).

5. **Map the Positive Core.** After all group have posted their flipcharts and post-its to the wall, each person will receive three dots.

- Individually: each person takes their three dots and begins to reflect upon the themes and strengths posted on the wall. Please put a dot on the theme or strength that you believe would be essential to creating what we want more of around our topic of *The AFKA at its Best.* Please try to use all three stickers and no more than one on any theme or strength.

### Individual Activity

Working alone, look at the themes posted on the walls. Decide which of the themes or threads you find the most exciting and energizing that you would like to include in **your** vision of the **AFKA at its Best** this weekend.

What themes or threads did you choose?

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What is **your** positive core in interacting with the AFKA at its Best?

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What do you personally **MOST** want to create **MORE** of in order to support the AFKA in moving forward?

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## Appendix H – AFKA AI Small Group Activity 2

### SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY #2 – Creating Visual Images of a Preferred Future (Part 1)

**DISCUSSION LEADER** – Manages the table task. Assures that each person who wants to speak is heard within the time available.

**TIMEKEEPER** – keep group aware of time left. Monitors report-outs and signals time remaining to person talking.

**RECORDER/REPORTER** – write group’s output on flip charts/post-it notes, using the speaker’s words. Delivers report to larger group in allotted time.

Each group manages its own dialogue and time using the guidelines below for self-managing this work.

**PURPOSE:** To create a future in which the high points identified in the stories are the everyday reality. You are envisioning the structure – whether it’s resources, processes, policies, whatever – for achieving this desired future. In Appreciative Inquiry, the Dreaming process consists of a visual image and word image.

#### VISUAL IMAGE GUIDELINES:

1. **Create a Shared vision of the Future**. As a group, have a discussion and create a shared image for your group engaging in ways that generate positive movement forward for the AFKA through systemic change. What does that look like? What are we doing to maintain our capacity for this? How do we support one another? What does it sound like? Feel like? Look like? Who, what, where, when, how?

2. **Visual Image**. Develop a creative way to share your image with others. You can create a skit, news broadcast, picture, sculpture, poem, rap, song, or other fun way to make your concept visual and memorable. Feel free to use anything in the room.

3. **Presentation**. Be prepared for a 2-minute presentation.

*(30 minutes)*

## Appendix I – AFKA AI Small Group Activity 3

### SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY #3 – Creating Word Images of a Preferred Future (Part 2)

#### WORD IMAGE GUIDELINES:

1. **Transform the Visual Image**. As a group, discuss how you might translate your visual image into a bold possibility or vision statement – often referred to in Appreciative Inquiry as a **Provocative Proposition** (word image). It is provocative to the extent that it **stretches** the realm of the status quo, **challenges** common assumptions or routines, and **helps suggest real possibilities** that represent desired possibilities for the group.

To develop a Good Provocative Proposition, ask yourself the following questions:

1. **Is it Provocative?** Does it stretch, challenge, or interrupt “habits”?
2. **Is it grounded?** Are there examples (stories) in the system that illustrates the ideal as a real possibility?
3. **Is it desired?** If it could be fully actualized, would the group want it? Do ***you*** want it as a preferred future?
4. **Is it affirmative?** Is it stated in bold and affirmative terms? *Is it written in the present tense?*
5. **Does it provoke action?**
- 6.

2. **Craft Word Image**. Recorder will capture the group’s Provocative Proposition on a flipchart. Several drafts of the Provocative Proposition may emerge as your group works to finalize this word image so that it meets all the criteria of a good provocative proposition (*see previous step*).

3. **Presentation**. Be prepared to share your Provocative Proposition.

*(30 minutes – 15 minutes for input/dialogue, 15 minutes to draft Provocative Proposition)*

*(Examples on reverse side)*

### Examples of Provocative Propositions

*"At our Town Community College our mission is to encourage curiosity through exploration and discovery of yourself, your community, and your world."*

*"We work within an environment of respect, compassion, appreciation, teamwork and professionalism through open communication."*

*"Our actions create positive change."*

*"Our collaborative environment provides space, time, and expert guidance for students and consulting staff to fully realize their capacities and potential. We offer the most innovative, energizing, welcoming, and collaborative training in the country. With writing as our focus, our aspiration is to foster human development in the university, the community, and beyond."*

*"We are a team of highly-trained technical professionals with extraordinary problem-solving skills and the ability to create positive outcomes from difficult situations. Team members support each other and promote a sense of fun in the workplace."*

*"Our Company is the premier choice for wellness. We exemplify quality and service. We facilitate transformation by our willingness to take risks, our ability to innovate, and our appreciation of diversity and autonomy."*

*"Gathering together, regularly, we collaborate to nurture, support, inspire, educate, and empower one another, while sharing resources, processes and programs."*

## Appendix J – AFKA AI Small Group Activity 4

### SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY #4 – Designing for Positive Movement Forward

**DISCUSSION LEADER** – Manages the table task. Assures that each person who wants to speak is heard within the time available.

**TIMEKEEPER** – keep group aware of time left. Monitors report-outs and signals time remaining to person talking.

**RECORDER/REPORTER** – write group's output on flip charts/post-it notes, using the speaker's words. Delivers report to larger group in allotted time.

Each group manages its own dialogue and time using the guidelines below for self-managing this work.

**PURPOSE:** Building upon your Provocative Propositions, the Design phase looks at the practicalities needed to support your group's shared vision of a preferred future. Here your group will begin to identify the types of resources, processes, and strategies needed to ensure your Provocative Proposition is realized.

#### **GUIDELINES:**

1. **Decide what you are going to design.** What could we do over our remaining time, starting today, to implement this idea? What is something tangible that would help us bring it to life? What practice, tool, or mechanism will support implementation?
2. **Create your design.** As a group, use the template on the reverse side of this page to transform your Provocative Proposition into a bold initiative.
3. **Capture the essence and post.** Recorder will transfer the information captured below onto a flipchart paper. When your group is finished, post your flipchart to the appropriate wall. Be prepared to present.

*(30 Minutes)*

**Provocative Proposition:**

**Bold Initiative (Strategy/Initiative/Practice):**

<b>Action Steps</b> <i>What actions do we need to take?</i> <i>What resources do we need to obtain?</i>	<b>Potential Mentors</b> <i>Who might help us?</i> <i>Who needs to be involved?</i>	<b>Confirmation – Timelines</b> <i>How will we know we did it?</i>

## Appendix K – AFKA AI Small Group Activity 5

### SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY #5 – Living into Our Destiny

**PURPOSE:** To become self-sustaining positive forward movement champions.

#### **GUIDELINES:**

1. **Individual Reflection.** Answer this question, “What steps will I take this week to actualize our bold initiative of “AFKA at its Best”?”

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2. **Take Action.** You have the opportunity, as an individual, to present the following to your small group.

- a. **State a simple Commitment.** A commitment is an action that can easily be taken by you without commitment(s) from others.
- b. **Make an Offer.** (eg. one person can offer others access to a resource that he or she controls) Offering is simply making an offer in a way that the person we are offering to help/assist is free to accept or reject our offer. Sounds simple, but when we are enmeshed in problem solving, our offers can have ulterior intentions and strategies – they are part of our strategy to solve the problem. Here however, an offer is freely made, without attachment to outcome.
- c. **Articulate a Request.** Requesting is asking for something where the person we are asking it of is free to accept, reject or counter offer. Requests, in this way of speaking, are not demands – that is because the person we make a request of is free to refuse our request. If they accept, they are effectively making a promise.

3. **Sharing and Collective Learning.** Share with your small group any offers, commitments, or requests you have regarding your bold initiative. As a group, discuss:

- a. How can your group gain commitments, offers, and/or requests from other participants to help support your initiative?
- b. How will we (as a small group) check-in to see how well our initiative is working, decide if any revisions or modifications are needed, and learn from our practice?

*(20 Minutes)*